Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

# Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMSTER 00692 221405Z
ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 /013 W
----------036167 222019Z /61
R 221245Z JUL 77
FM AMCONSUL AMSTERDAM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3194
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

UNCLAS AMSTERDAM 692

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CDES, NL (TENERIFE AIR DISASTER)
SUBJECT: TENERIFE AIR DISASTER

REF: STATE 159058

1. AUTHORITY TO ORDER DISINTERMENT VESTED IN MAYOR OF AMSTERDAM WHO HAS DELEGATED THIS AUTHORITY TO MR. VRIJHOF, DIRECTOR OF MUNICIPAL CEMETARIES. VRIJHOF HAS TOLD CONGEN HE IS OPPOSED TO DISINTERMENT NOW BECAUSE A) WEATHER TOO WARM, B) CEMETARY STAFF DEPLETED DURING VACATION PERIOD, AND C) POSSIBLE DISTURBING EFFECT OF DIGGING ON THE MANY FRIENDS AND RELATIVES HE SAYS DAILY VISIT GRAVE SITE. FYI: COFFINS 212 AND 224 ARE IN MASS GRAVE OF VICTIMS AND BOTH ARE AT BOTTOM OF ABOUT FIVE LAYERS OF COFFINS.

2. VRIJHOF PROPOSES DISINTERMENT ABOUT MID-SEPTEMBER 1977. HE ALSO REQUESTS SIMULTANEOUS EXCHANGE AND REBURIAL OF COFFINS NOW IN U.S. HE FEELS THAT IF SIMULTANEOUS EXCHANGE CAN BE EFFECTED BY MID-SEPTEMBER AND IF DISINTERMENT-REBURIAL CAN BE TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH ERECTION OF MONUMENT HE SAYS KLM PLANS FOR SITE, THE OPERATION WILL ATTRACT MINIMUM PUBLIC ATTENTION.

3. WE RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT GO ALONG WITH VRIJHOF'S PROPOSAL UNLESS THERE ARE CONSIDERATIONS OF WHICH WE ARE NOT AWARE.
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PAGE 02 AMSTER 00692 221405Z

WE DISCUSSED OUR RECOMMENDATION WITH AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE WHICH CONCURS. WE INFORMED MISS FOWLER OF SCS STATE OF OUR RECOMMENDATION BY PHONE ON JULY 15. AT HER SUGGESTION WE DISCUSSED MATTER WITH PAN AM, AMSTERDAM. PAN AM LOCAL DIRECTOR ON LEAVE BUT HIS SECRETARY, WHO IS FULLY INFORMED OF MATTER, HAS TOLD US SHE HAS DISCUSSED OUR RECOMMENDATION WITH TREMAIN OF PAN AM, NEW YORK. SHE IS OF OPINION TREMAIN AGREEABLE TO

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

MID-SEPTEMBER DISINTERMENT.

4. WE HAD TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH KLM FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF REFTEL SINCE WE HAD NO PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT MATTER. WE LEARNED THAT KLM IS AWARE OF VRIJHOF'S POSITION. WE HAVE HAD NO FURTHER CONTACT WITH KLM ABOUT THIS AND HAVE NOT DISCUSSED WITH THEM OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT WE GO ALONG WITH VRIJHOF'S PROPOSALS.

5. WE SPOKE WITH LT. OOSTERBROEK OF NETHERLANDS NATIONAL POLICE WHO SUGGESTED WE REQUEST ASSISTANCE OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS REGARDING AUTHORITY TO DISINTER. WE ARE HESITANT TO DO THIS IN VIEW OF VRIJHOF'S POSITION.

6. IF DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH OUR RECOMMENDATION, IT IS REQUESTED THAT ALL STEPS POSSIBLE BE TAKEN TO ASSURE RETURN OF COFFINS NOW IN U.S. BY MID-SEPTEMBER. WOULD APPRECIATE INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE FURTHER CONTACTS WITH KLM AMSTERDAM WITH REGARD TO TIMING OF DISINTERMENT OR MONUMENT TO BE ERECTED ON SITE.
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# Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**
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